The people’s vote

**Dr COLIN IRWIN, of Queen’s University, analyses the findings of an in-depth opinion poll undertaken on the eve of Monday’s crucial Stormont talks.**

Although 52% of the people of Northern Ireland now feel that it is time for the Talks to finish, some parties have already left them.

**Question 1:** Should walkouts stop the talks?

If the remaining Unionist parties leave the Talks, the remaining Ulster Unionists would be left alone with the pro-Irish parties. This could be unacceptable to Unionists, who would be left without any real representation in the talks.

**Question 2:** A REFEREE EVEN IF TALKS FAIL?

If the Borders referendum, which has been approved by the people of Northern Ireland, fails, the talks could collapse. The Ulster Unionists could then be left with no real representation in the Talks.

**Summary:**

All Ulster parties agreed that the talks should continue. A referendum on the Borders issue could be held, but it is not clear whether the Ulster Unionists would support this. If the Ulster Unionists do not agree to a referendum, the Ulster Unionists could call for a new round of talks.

**Question 3:** Do you want to have a SAY in Ulster’s future?

If the Ulster Unionists can agree to a referendum on the Borders issue, the Ulster Unionists should be able to say that they have had their say. However, the Ulster Unionists should also be careful not to overreach themselves in their demands, as this could lead to a collapse of the talks.

**Question 4:** A REFEREE HELD NORTH AND SOUTH?

If the Ulster Unionists agree to a referendum on the Borders issue, the Ulster Unionists should be able to say that they have had their say. However, the Ulster Unionists should also be careful not to overreach themselves in their demands, as this could lead to a collapse of the talks.

**Question 5:** What percentage passes a REFEREE?

What kind of vote is acceptable to both communities in Northern Ireland? The Ulster Unionists are in favor of a 50-50 vote, while the Ulster Unionists are in favor of a 50-50 vote. This could lead to a collapse of the talks.

**The Poll:** This poll was undertaken with the support of a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust in association with the Belfast Telegraph and UTV. With the cooperation of members of the two leading political parties in Northern Ireland, the research was carried out by Dr Colin Irwin of the Institute of Irish Studies at The Queen’s University of Belfast.

Market Research Northern Ireland (MRNI) conducted the fieldwork for the survey, which were conducted in Northern Ireland on October 11. The survey was carried out by telephone and involved 1,012 representative respondents from across Northern Ireland. The survey was conducted by representatives of the Northern Ireland Referendum Trust (NIRT) and the Belfast Telegraph.

**The Poll:**

- **Only Northern Ireland:** 52% Yes
- **Inland of Ireland:** 15% Yes
- **UK: GI and NI:** 10% Yes

- **Protestant:**
  - **Only Northern Ireland:** 74% Yes
  - **Inland of Ireland:** 24% Yes
  - **UK: GI and NI:** 5% Yes

- **Catholic:**
  - **Only Northern Ireland:** 64% Yes
  - **Inland of Ireland:** 36% Yes
  - **UK: GI and NI:** 23% Yes

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- **Desirable:** 15% Yes

- **Unacceptable:** 40% Yes

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